

(v) Organizations like National Test House (NTH) provides facilities for testing various products and services.

(vi) The Department provides grants to various NGOs/VCOs for Consumer Welfare activities.

(c) Assaying and Hallmarking centres are set up by private entrepreneurs in various places based on the commercial viability. With a view to encourage entrepreneurs to set up more such centres, the Government is operating a scheme under which financial assistance towards cost of machinery and equipment is extended. Rate of financial assistance in terms of percentage of cost of machinery and equipment is as under:—

Area	To Private Entrepreneurs	To Public Sector Undertakings
NE Region/Jammu and Kashmir/ Himachal Pradesh/Uttarakhand/Rural Areas	50%	75%
Other Places	30%	50%

252 Assaying and Hallmarking Centres recognized by BIS are in operation as on December, 2013.

Procurement of wheat

3034. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the target fixed for purchase of wheat in the current year; and

(b) the steps being taken by Government to meet the target fixed in view of shortage of godowns and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K. V. THOMAS): (a) The estimate fixed for purchase of wheat in the current year *i.e.* Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2014-15 is 310.00 lakh tonnes.

(b) In the meeting of State Food Secretaries to review preparation of procurement of wheat in RMS 2014-15, the States have reported that they have no problem of storage space for wheat to be procured to meet the estimates. The steps taken by the Government to meet the estimates of procurement are given in Statement.

*Statement**Steps taken by the Government to meet the estimates of Procurement*

- Before the start of every marketing season, Department of Food and Public Distribution convenes a meeting of State food secretaries, Food Corporation of India and other stake holders to prepare a detailed action plan for making the arrangements of procurement in the coming marketing season. Details of number of procurement centres to be opened and arrangements like purchase of packaging material and storage space are discussed in the meeting.
- Sufficient number of procurement centres are opened by FCI/State Government, agencies in mutual consultation before onset of procurement season, keeping in view the procurement potential and geographical spread of the State concerned. Review is made from time to time on the need for additional procurement centres, if any, during the procurement season and required additional procurement centres are also opened.
- Instructions have been issued to FCI and States to open procurement centres at locations convenient to farmers where they could bring their produce for Government procurement.
- The State Governments engage Self Help Groups (SHGs)/Societies etc. who can have better reach and increase the volume of procurement.
- To spread awareness, MSP operations are given wide publicity through pamphlets, banners, sign boards and advertisements through print and electronic media regarding MSP, quality, specifications, purchase system, etc. so that the farmers may bring their produce conforming to the specifications.
- To ensure that the benefit of MSP reaches the farmers, arrangements have been made to make payments to farmers through account payee cheque/electronic mode, wherever possible.
- State Governments are encouraged to adopt Decentralised Procurement (DCP) system of procurement with a view to enhancing the efficiency of procurement and PDS and encouraging local procurement to the maximum extent thereby extending the benefits of MSP to local farmers as well as to save on transit costs. This also enables procurement of foodgrains more suited to the local taste. Under the decentralized procurement scheme, the State Government itself undertakes direct purchase of paddy and wheat and procurement of levy rice on behalf of Government of India. Purchase centres are opened by the State Governments and their agencies

as per their requirements. The State Governments procure, store and distribute foodgrains under TPDS and other welfare schemes. Procured quantities in excess of State's requirement is taken in the Central Pool for distribution elsewhere, while shortfall is met from the Central Pool. The Central Government monitors the quality of foodgrains procured under the scheme and reviews the arrangements made to ensure that the procurement operations are carried on smoothly.

Fake consumer items

3035. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that markets in the country are full of fake consumer items, particularly, electrical items, cold drinks, foreign liquor etc. which is harmful for consumers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action Government has taken or proposes to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) Sir, no such data is available with Department of Revenue — Central Board of Excise and Customs, Department of Consumer Affairs, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). To protect consumers from harmful effects, random samples of food items are being drawn by the State Food Safety Officers as the implementation and enforcement of Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006 rests with the State/UT Governments. The samples drawn are sent to the laboratories recognized by FSSAI for analysis. Penal action is initiated if the sample does not conform to the provisions of the FSS Act, 2006 and the Rules and Regulations made thereunder.

Implementation of Food Security Act

3036. DR. BHALCHANDRA MUNGEKAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Government is planning to take to ensure satisfactory implementation of the National Food Security Act; and

(b) the efforts being made to secure co-ordination with State Governments for implementation of the Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The